The Chaplain

As Moral and Ethical Advisor

SECNAVINST 1730.7C

- Commanding Officer is responsible for the moral, spiritual, and personal well-being of the unit
- The Chaplain's responsibility as Department Head and Staff Officer is to be the principal advisor to the Commanding Officer on Religious, Ethical, and Moral matters

Qualities of a Moral Leader

Chaplains must have own moral identity *and* understanding of the various dimensions/perspectives of moral development in both the Institution and in its' people to be effective.

Chaplains must be able to *link* their values to both the institution and people to bring about change.

The Source of Authority

- Chapel/Faith Group: They listen because of ordination, Bible, Faith Tradition. “Religious Language” understood and accepted
- Marine/Naval Community: They listen because we’re officers who represent a “common” moral stance. Expect that behavior to be “embodied” in us always

An Effective Moral Agent will:

- Identify relevant moral issues
- Prioritize them
- Develop persuasive abilities and skills
- Find effective "language" to address the issues within pluralistic military society
- Develop Position, Opportunity, and Timing

Identifying the Issues....

- Write down five Ethical Issues within your own command

Identifying the Issues… Places to Look…

Truth *vs Loyalty*

Individualism *vs* Community

Justice *vs* Mercy

Long term *vs* Short Term

Some Issues:

- **Allowing a Chaplain/RP to transfer w/28% body fat- failing CREST**

Truth…28%? Or Loyalty…to individual?

Justice…to Institution? Or Mercy..he tried!

Individual..Me?-I don’t want to look bad, or the Community..CREST?

Some Issues:

- FITREPS:

  Truth: Works good when alone in a BN, but not a team player w/other chaplains

  Loyalty: To give one sided report to suit the commander

Some Issues:

- Emergency Leave
- Books/ Magazines Sold in Exchange
- Clothes sold by MCCS: that Marines not allowed to wear on Base
- Beer booths vs Soda booths 5-1 at MCCS Bayfest/ non alcoholic rec areas.
- Combat Readiness: effect on safety and domestic violence (Truth Vs Loyalty)

PRIORITIZE THEM… Moral Weight

Integrity of the person

Risks to life, safety. violence, abuse

Integrity of the act

Things affecting moral/ethical climate (ie: environmental issues, values, etc)

Immediate or long term implications

Religious (Justice/Rights/Morals) or **UCMJ**

LANGUAGE

- Everyone listens differently
  influenced by:

1) Own philosophical ethics (relativism vs objectivity
2) Society's dialogue & laws
3) One's own experience and milieu
4) One's own religious beliefs/traditions

Language: key-find the hook!

- Religion? Ten Commandments?
- Military: UCMJ
  - SECNAV/MARINE CORPS ORDERS
  - Sexual Harassment policies
  - Domestic Violence/Safety
- Values: (Apply to Institution)
  - Connecting “virtue” of our heritage w/ Honor, Courage, Commitment

Language: Prima Facie Duties

1. **Making reparations for wrongs**
   The language of character and human dignity
2. **Promise Keeping/Truth Telling**
3. **Duties of Gratitude**
4. **Beneficence/Maleficence**
5. **Duties of Justice/distribution of goods and evils**
6. **Duties of self improvement/virtue**
7. **Respect for liberty/self determination**

Language: Three Tests Balance: Utility, Justice, Rights

- **Golden Rule** (Rights)

- **Utility**

- **Kant's Categorical Imperative**

  - What if everyone did it?

  - What if it appeared in NY Times?

POSITION, OPPORTUNITY AND TIMING

- Opportunity: immediate (Morally weighted issues: human life, dignity, rights, freedom.
- Opportunity: prudence (right moment)

  Wait for right setting, w/right people

  Be ready-TV minute
- Position: How do you handle it when you're not in the right decision making circles?
- When CO asks for advice
- When personnel concerned ab/issue

An Effective Moral Agent will:

- Identify relevant moral issues
- Prioritize them /Develop persuasive skills
- Find effective "language" as hook
- Develop Position, Opportunity, and Timing

Effect: THIS IS UNDOUBTEDLY TRUE!!

Dangers:

- Ethical neutrality- says nothing
- Moralizing, preaching, trivializing
- Secular humanism- we’re chaplains who represent a moral standard and beliefs-and a living faith-not secular humanists

Called to be prophets

What makes the prophet effective

-not heroics or theater

-not grandstanding

-not insensitivity

But finding the right “hook” for effective moral change and living to fight...

another day!